THE PUNISHER®

EDMONDSON • GERADS

MARVEL

FRANK CASTLE was once a decorated Marine officer, an upstanding citizen and family man. Then his family was violently taken from him when they were accidentally killed in a mob hit. From that day on, Frank Castle shed his old identity and became a force of cold, calculated retribution and vigilantism known as

THE PUNISHER

PREVIOUSLY

After killing the leader of the Dos Soles gang, getting shot by the new Howling Commandos, and captured by a Central American crime lord, Frank escaped the mercenary Crossbones with the unexpected assistance of Black Widow. However, after their escape Natasha appeared to rethink assisting the vigilante Punisher, as she dropped him off in a Costa Rican prison. In prison Frank caused a riot, using the chaos to find a mysterious man named "Ruiz."

Meanwhile, the fall of the Dos Soles and the absence of the Punisher has plunged L.A. into chaos. Officer Stone, having killed a perp in a robbery by shooting him in the back, has been suspended from duty. Lou, the owner of the Nickel Diner, was brutally beaten by gang members.

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THE DOS SOLES ARE THE LARGEST, STRONGEST GANG IN THE AMERICAS. THAT MY BROTHER WAS KILLED IS ONLY A SMALL DEFEAT FOR US, BUT IT HAS *ENRAGED* ME.

LOS ANGELES.

I INVITE YOU ALL TO JOIN US. ALLIES. ALLIES IN DESTRUCTION.

TONIGHT, I WANT LOS ANGELES TO BURN. TONIGHT, I WANT THIS CITY TO CRUMBLE.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

NOT THAT WE DON'T MIND KILLING SOME COPS...

THE POINT IS FOR THEM TO FALL. FOR US TO RISE.

TRUE CONTROL OF THE STREETS. AN INTERNATIONAL GANG THAT HOLDS POLITICAL SWAY OVER THE COUNTRY. A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH.

AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?

MEMBERSHIP. BUT BEYOND THAT...

I LEAVE THE REWARDS TO YOU TO REAP.

THE PUNISHER IS GONE, THE HEROES ARE IN THE SKY...

ONE BROTHER HAS FALLEN, BUT DOS SOLES WILL RISE!

KILL ME. IT WILL MAKE NO DIFFERENCE.

COSTA RICA.

YOU THINK THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I AM? OF COURSE THEY KNOW. BUT HERE, I CAN DO THEM NO HARM.

HERE, THEY WILL LET ME LIVE.

SUCH A LIFE AS IT IS.

THERE IS NOTHING OF VALUE THAT I CAN TELL YOU ANYWAY!

I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT.

THERE WAS A SHIP. IN THE PACIFIC. COMMUNICATIONS ARRAY.

WHO OWNED IT?

I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT YOU-- WHATEVER YOUR REAL NAME IS, *RUIZ*--YOU PURCHASED THE BOAT. YOUR NAME WAS ON THE PURCHASE AGREEMENT, FOUND ON BOARD.

I WAS JUST A MIDDLEMAN. THAT IS WHAT I DO. *DID.*

I BUY THINGS FOR PEOPLE SOUTH OF THE UNITED STATES. I GET PAID COMMISSIONS. I DID THAT. NOT ANYMORE.

AND THE SHIP? WHO PAID YOU THAT COMMISSION?

NUMBERS. I WAS TRUSTED BECAUSE I COULD REMEMBER NUMBERS AND I NEVER NEEDED A *NAME.*

BUT THIS GROUP...THEY WERE DIFFERENT. MYSTERIOUS. BIG. POWERFUL. RICH.

AND *UNFORGIVING.*

JUST FOR ASKING, THEY WILL COME AFTER YOU.

THEY ALREADY PAID SOMEBODY TO GET ME. I GOT AWAY.

AND THEY PAID FOR THE DOS SOLES? THEY PROVIDED THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS?

WHAT? YOU MEAN THE DEAD VILLAGERS? NO. NO, THAT WAS A WHOLE OTHER THING.

A WHOLE OTHER HORNET'S NEST.

I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW. I WANT *NUMBERS.*

...ESCALATING VIOLENCE, WITH LOOTING, AND THE BURNING OF DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS...

...ADDITIONAL ACTS OF VIOLENCE ARE BEING REPORTED IN COMPTON, CUDAHY, AND AS FAR INTO THE VALLEY AS VAN NUYS...

MNN

...POLICE REPORTS INDICATE THAT MANY OF THESE CRIMES ARE BEING COMMITTED BY HEAVILY ARMED GANGS, LEADING AUTHORITIES TO BELIEVE THERE IS A NEW SOURCE OF ILLEGAL ARMS IN THE L.A. AREA...

LOS ANGELES.

LOU. MY GOD. I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD--

DON'T THINK HE CAN HEAR YOU, SUGAR. BUT YOU CAN TRY.

I'M SO SORRY...

IT'S THESE, THESE... *THUGS.*

NO ONE IS *DOING* ANYTHING. IT'S HELL OUT THERE.

IF ONLY I HAD BEEN THERE...

I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, LOU.

DON'T YOU WORRY.

I'VE GOT THIS.

REHABILITATION. WHAT A JOKE.

IT TOOK ME SPILLING ONE CUP TO START THIS RIOT.

THEY'RE ANIMALS. THEY DON'T DESERVE TO BE TREATED AS PEOPLE ANYMORE.

LEAVE THE CELLS OPEN. LET THEM DEVOUR ONE ANOTHER.

LIKE RATS STUCK ON A BOAT.

EXECUTING PRISONERS NOW, ARE WE?

RATS. ALL OF THEM.

VICIOUS.

YOU STARTED THIS. YOU'RE GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE.

DESPERATE.

SMALL.

STUPID.

TWACK!

ANGRY.

BITING.

KLANG!

GNARLING.

SCRATCHING.

RATS.

PATHETIC.

STOP!

KLANK!

ENOUGH!

YOU'LL KILL HIM.

TAKE HIM TO THE INFIRMARY.

OY, AMIGO, UNA COSA.

JUST -COUGH- ONE -COUGH- MORE THING...

I'M NOT IN NEED OF MEDICAL ATTENTION.

SOME PLANS WORK PERFECTLY.

IF YOU CAN STOMACH A LITTLE PAIN, THERE'S NOT MUCH YOU CAN'T DO.

DRIVE, IF YOU WANT TO LIVE.

DOWNTOWN L.A..

YOU GUYS KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A BEATING THAT WENT DOWN ON THIS BLOCK?

WHAT BEATING? BEATINGS DAILY. KNOCKOUTS. WE RULE THE STREETS NOW, SISTER.

THIS WAS A COOK AT THE NICKEL DINER. BEATEN RIGHT OUTSIDE. NO ROBBERY. I WANNA KNOW WHO DID IT.

WHAT'S IT TO YA?

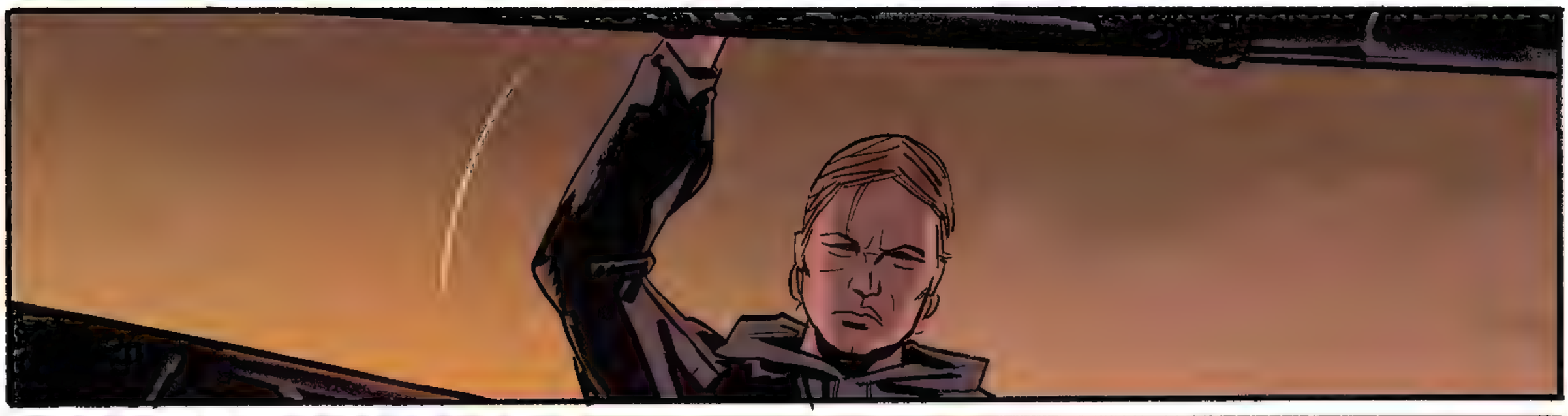
NAME AND LOCATION.

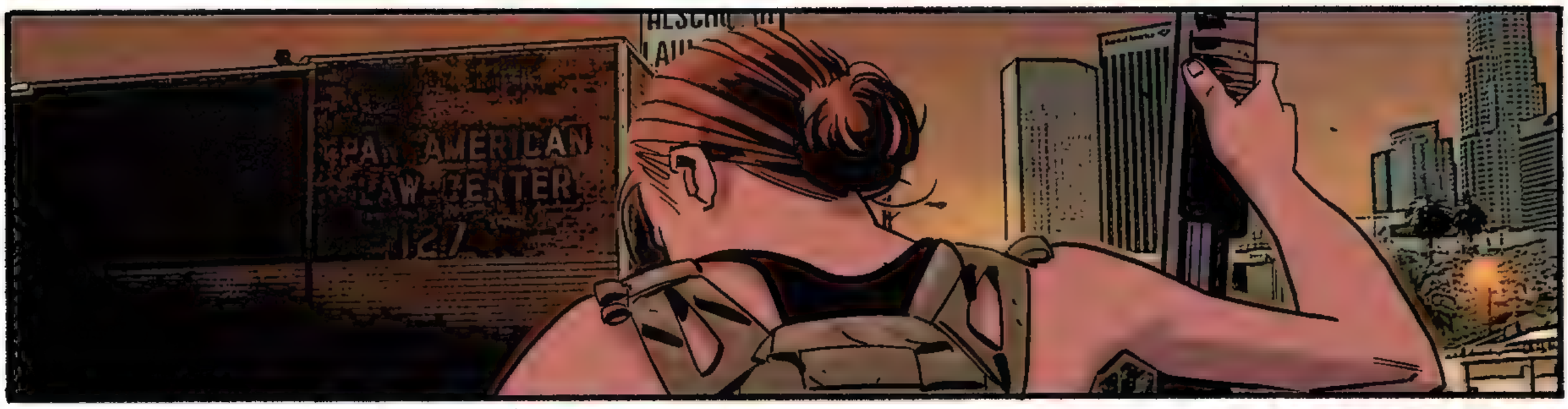
EASY. SMALL TIMERS THINK THEY OWN THE WHOLE NICKEL AREA NOW. SKID ROW AND UP.

PUNK KIDS. THEY'RE A BLOCK DOWN. HANGING OUT BY THE EMPTY THEATER.

THEY GOT THE BLACK HATS. THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW.

THANKS FOR THAT.




PAN AMERICAN
LAW CENTER

HEY, HOMIES.

NICARAGUA.

I'M FINE.

NOW YOU HAVE THE NUMBER.

AND DID YOU FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

NO, BUT THAT'S NOT PART OF THE DEAL, BLACK WIDOW.

NO, IT WASN'T. BUT HOPEFULLY YOU LEARNED SOMETHING THAT WILL GIVE YOU DIRECTION.

I LEARNED WHERE TO GO NEXT.

OUR DEAL IS DONE. I DON'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

THE DEAL IS DONE...

"...I HAVE WHAT I NEEDED FROM YOU, FRANCIS."

SOONER OR LATER, FRANK, SOMEONE WAS GOING TO GET THE DROP ON YOU.

THE AVENGERS AREN'T A FAN OF YOURS, BUT I HAVE MY OWN AGENDA.

AND I KNOW WHO BOUGHT THE BOAT.

S.H.I.E.L.D. TELLS ME THIS GUY IS IN A COSTA RICAN PRISON.

I WANT YOU TO GO FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND ALL OF THIS.

AND WHAT'S NEXT?

WAITING ON MY RIDE BACK TO THE STATES.

...THE ONE PERSON I CAN STILL TRUST.

"PLEASE, DON'T, LADY. PLEASE!"

I ☠ L.A

I ☠ LA

DO YOU *REMEMBER* WHAT YOU DID?

DO YOU *REMEMBER* MY FRIEND?

HE'S IN A *COMA!*

I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO--I JUST WANTED TO BE PART-- I JUST--PLEASE!

I LA

FREEZE! POLICE! PUT THE GUN DOWN!

NICE AND EASY-- SAMMY?

7733729

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE, STONE?

WHAT YOU AREN'T.

HONK

I DIDN'T DRIVE TWENTY HOURS THROUGH THREE COUNTRIES TO SIT AND WATCH YOU SLEEP.

GET IN.

I GUESS I'M LUCKY YOU HAD A DAY OFF.

FRANK, WHAT IN THE WORLD HAVE YOU DONE TO YOURSELF?

HELLO, RACHEL. WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME FOR ME TO EXPLAIN.

GET ME OUT OF HERE.

SO. I TAKE IT THE OTHER GUY WAS IN BETTER SHAPE?

THE OTHER GUY WAS A DOZEN PRISON GUARDS. BEFORE THAT, CROSSBONES.

I READ ABOUT YOUR MOVE TO L.A. I THOUGHT I MIGHT GET A CALL.

I'M NOT MUCH OF A PHONE PERSON.

I'VE BEEN TRACKING THE DOS SOLES, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHO SUPPLIED THEM WITH CHEMICAL WEAPONS--SEEMS A LIFETIME AGO I STARTED DOWN THAT PATH...

I WANTED TO GUT THIS NEW INTERNATIONAL GANG, GUT THEM AND LEAVE THEM BLEEDING. THAT'S ALL.

BUT IT'S BEEN DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE FROM THERE.

SO YOU DON'T KNOW WHO SUPPLIES THEM?

THEY DIDN'T GET THEIR CHEMICAL WEAPONS FROM A.I.M. OR ANY ARMS DEALER--THE WEAPONS WERE U.S.-MADE, ACCORDING TO MY SOURCE.

BUT WHAT *THAT* MEANS I DON'T KNOW.

I'M WORN OUT, RACHEL.

BEAT TO HELL.

AND I'M NOT YOUNG.

I'M READY TO CALL IT QUITS.

SCREEEECH!

RACHEL, WHY HAVE WE STOPPED?

THIS? THIS IS WHERE YOU LEAVE THINGS?

A LITTLE BLOOD UNDER THE SKIN AND YOU'RE READY TO GO? *READ* THAT. LOOK AT THE HEADLINES.

LOS ANGELES WEEKLY
L.A. QUAKES WITH GANG ACTIVITY

PURA VIDA

L.A. IS WORSE THAN EVER. YOU SHOWED UP, YOU PUNISHED, AND YOU SPLIT. YOU LEFT A VACUUM.

WORD IS GUILLERMO DEL SOL'S BROTHER, HECTOR, HAS ARRIVED IN TOWN.

THIS IS THE MOST POWERFUL GANG IN HISTORY.

LOS ANGELES WEEKLY
L.A. QUAKES WITH GANG ACTIVITY
By Jevon Phillips

I DON'T HAVE AN ENDGAME. WHAT'S THE GOAL? WHAT IS THE MISSION OBJECTIVE?

THAT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM WAR, FRANK. ONE KILL AT A TIME. ONE MAGAZINE AT A TIME.

PURA VIDA

LIKE IT OR NOT, L.A. NEEDS YOU.

LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU'RE IN THIS.

HOW DO YOU DISABLE AND DESTROY A TERRORIST CELL?

CUT OFF THEIR FUNDING AND SUPPLY.

SO WHO'S FUNDING THE DOS SOLES?

DRUGS.

PURA VIDA

AND THEIR SUPPLY?

WHO SOLD THEM THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS?

AND WHY ARE AMERICAN COMMANDOS TRYING TO KILL ME?

PURA VIDA

WHAT IF THEY'RE CONNECTED?

...

GET BACK IN THE CAR.

KANSAS.

DING DONG

HONEY, CAN YOU GET THAT?

YEAH.

CAN I HELP YOU?

I'M LOOKING FOR A MS. CASTIGLIONE.

THERE'S NO ONE HERE BY THAT NAME--

MAYBE NOT NOW. BUT IT USED TO BE YOUR WIFE'S NAME.

I DON'T MEAN TO INTRUDE. I JUST WANTED TO DELIVER SOMETHING.

WHAT THE--

WHAT IS THIS?

PSSSHH

CALL IT A SLEEP AID.

THIS ISN'T REALLY WHAT I SIGNED UP FOR WHEN I JOINED THE HOWLING COMMANDOS, TORCHIA.

ME EITHER.

MOFFLY, MYERS...

HELP ME WITH THE BODIES. ORDERS ARE ORDERS.

TO BE CONTINUED...